

PLANNING COMMITTEE: 28th July 2020
DEPARTMENT: Planning Service
DIRECTOR OF PLANNING: Peter Baguley

APPLICATION REF: N/2020/0257

LOCATION: Senior Citizens Community Room, Hinton Road

DESCRIPTION: Change of Use of Community Hall (Use Class D1) to Dwellinghouse (Use Class C3), with dropped kerb for wheelchair access only and alteration to windows and doors

WARD: Sunnyside Ward

APPLICANT: Northampton Partnership Homes
AGENT: Mr Nota

REFERRED BY: Director of Planning and Sustainability
REASON: Council owned land

DEPARTURE: No

APPLICATION FOR DETERMINATION:

1 RECOMMENDATION

1.1 **APPROVAL** subject to the conditions as set out below and for the following reason:

The proposal site is in a sustainable location, in an established residential area with access to public transport. The proposed conversion would contribute to the Council's 5-year housing supply. Subject to the conditions proposed, the development would not lead to any unacceptable adverse impacts on existing highway or existing and proposed residential amenity, or adjacent land uses. As such, the proposal is considered to be in accordance with the aims and objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework, Policies SA, S10, H1, of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy, and Policy E20 of the Northampton Local Plan.

2 THE PROPOSAL

2.1 It is proposed to change the use of the property from a community room (Use Class D1) to a single dwelling (Use Class C3) with three bedrooms, a large bathroom, kitchen and living room which would provide a home for tenant with disabilities. Off road parking is provided within the existing car park and a new dropped kerb is to be created for wheelchair access.

2.2 The proposal also includes new and altered window openings, and front and rear doors. A garden will be formed within the surrounding open space to the north and east, with a low-level fencing along the western elevation of the property.

3 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 3.1 The site comprises a single-storey community centre, with car park and surrounding open space. There are a number of trees surrounding the property, which also sits to the rear of bungalows which front Hinton Road, Cosgrove Road and Cosgrove Way.

4 PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 None relevant.

5 PLANNING POLICY

5.1 Statutory Duty

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires a planning application to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material planning considerations indicate otherwise. The Development Plan for the purposes of this application comprises the adopted West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (2014) and the Northampton Local Plan (1997) saved policies.

6 National Policies

- 6.1 **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** sets out the current aims and objectives for the planning system and how these should be applied. In delivering sustainable development, decisions should have regard to the mutually dependent social, economic and environmental roles of the planning system. The NPPF should be read as one complete document. However, the following sections are of particular relevance to this application:

2 – Achieving Sustainable Development
4 – Decision Making
5 – Delivering a Sufficient Supply of Homes
8 – Promoting Healthy and Safe Communities
9 – Promoting Sustainable Transport
12 – Achieving Well-Designed Places

6.2 West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (2014)

The West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (JCS) provides an up to date evidence base and considers the current Government requirements for plan making as it has been prepared in full conformity with the NPPF. Policies of particular relevance are:

SA – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
S10 – Sustainable Development Principles
H1 – Housing Density and Mix and Type of Dwellings

6.3 Northampton Local Plan 1997 (Saved Policies)

Due to the age of the plan, the amount of weight that can be attributed to the aims and objectives of this document are diminished, however, the following policy is material to this application:

E20 – Design of New Development

6.4 Supplementary Planning Documents

Planning out Crime in Northamptonshire SPG 2004
Residential Extensions and Alterations Design Guide SPD 2011
Northamptonshire County Parking Standards 2016

7 CONSULTATIONS/ REPRESENTATIONS

Comments received are summarised as follows:

- 7.1 **NBC Environmental Health** – No objections. Includes the following observations: in keeping with the Council's adopted Low Emission Strategy, the development should include 1 charging point; all gas-fired boilers to meet a minimum standard of <40 mgNO_x/kWh; conditions recommended in relation to land contamination.
- 7.2 **NCC Highways** – Observation that the access road and footpaths are not highway land.
- 7.3 **Councillor Parekh** – Called in the application as local constituents would like to speak (call-in considered invalid as it was out of time).
- 7.4 **15 neighbour/third party objections** have been received from 13 objectors and 12 different addresses. Comments are summarised:
- There will be nowhere for elderly community to go. No other facility like this in the area.
 - Currently in use for different groups and as a polling station.
 - New fencing will create an alleyway.
 - Not in the public interest to remove a community building. NPH favour housing over community facilities.
 - There are groups which would like to take over/run the facility.
 - New dwelling will lead to loss of light, overlooking, noise disturbance and burglary.
 - A dwelling would not be in keeping with the area.
 - The rear field is used for leisure/dog walking.
 - Consultation is happening after the planning application.
 - The centre needs better management.
 - Windows on the west will reduce privacy of residents.

8 APPRAISAL

- 8.1 Paragraph 118 of the NPPF, encourages the use of brownfield sites and the re-use of under-utilised land and buildings for residential use where there is an identified need for additional housing in the area.
- 8.2 The site is currently used as a local community centre. The proposal intends to convert the building into a single bungalow, which will comprise of three bedrooms, an open plan kitchen living area and a large bathroom/wet room. To the front of the dwelling there are existing parking spaces and manoeuvring space and part of the side/ rear grassed area will be enclosed to create a garden.
- 8.3 Northampton Partnership Homes (NPH), have confirmed that the change of use is down to this site being underutilised. NPH have conducted a review of the usage of all the community hubs as part of a wider review of assets, wherein it was concluded that a number of facilities were not used, and 16 Community Hubs are to be reduced to 13. A number of the remaining 13 centres are to be re-furnished to provide better facilities for local residents. The 3 centres with low usage numbers are to be redeveloped into residential accommodation for new tenants. This information has been shared with the Council as part of this planning application.
- 8.4 The process has previously included a review of assets submitted to Northampton Borough Council to progress to the next stage to either invest in certain facilities, to re-provide new where necessary or to find alternative uses to those where there was insufficient demand. It was decided that the application site would be better utilised as a dwelling and the submission of a planning application has led to a consultation process being undertaken with residents. A site

notice was displayed in the local area and a number of resident responses and objections have been received in relation to the application.

- 8.5 NPH has provided suggested alternative locations for existing groups which use the Hinton Road Community Centre. These include centres at the Liburd Room, Leicester Street or Market Street. The closest centre to remain in the immediate locality is the Liburd Room in Kingsthorpe which is approximately 1 mile away from the application site and located on Whilton Road. This is considered to be an acceptable alternative.
- 8.6 The site is in a sustainable location, located within an established residential area with good access to the local centre on Harborough Road and bus routes into the town centre. Subject to the considerations discussed within the remainder of this report, the principle of conversion of the existing building to residential dwelling is considered acceptable.

Design

- 8.7 The NPPF advises that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development. These aims are reflected in Policy S10 of the JCS which require new development to achieve the highest standards of sustainable design incorporating safety and security measures.
- 8.8 In respect of the existing building, the development would only make minor changes to the external appearance of the building. The south of the building which forms the front elevation will include new windows serving two bedrooms and a new front entrance door with side panel. The main footprint of the property will remain the same. The north elevation (rear) will have the existing windows and doors removed and 2x new windows inserted, with new double-glazed sliding doors inserted to provide access to the rear garden. The side elevation to the west will retain one high level window which will provide light into the kitchen and insert a new high elevation and obscurely glazed window for the bathroom. One existing window will be removed on this elevation. The eastern elevation which will have outlook onto the rear garden to be created will include the insertion of one window to serve a bedroom.
- 8.9 These changes are considered to be minimal with no extensions to be provided. It is not considered that these works would not have a significant impact upon the character and appearance of the local area.
- 8.10 In terms of boundary treatments, the garden is proposed to the side and rear and would be enclosed by a 1.8m fence to safeguard the privacy of the private garden space. There are a mix of low and higher garden fences to the rear gardens of existing bungalows which provide a level of surveillance over the open space and footpaths. The fence would back onto the footpath at one section and some concern has been raised in this regard. However, this is a relatively small area to be enclosed, with the remaining site being open and on balance, it is considered to be acceptable in design terms. Notwithstanding this, more detailed information on boundary treatments can be secured via a condition attached to the decision. The inclusion of a low 1m railing to the west and boundary planting would provide additional security for the property, in addition to a more visually improved appearance. Again, details of this boundary treatment can be secured via a condition.
- 8.11 Objections have been received on the design stating that windows to the west will reduce privacy. However, the proposed windows have been amended through the course of the application to be high-level windows (on the west elevation) and this would safeguard privacy of both existing residents' gardens and rear windows, and also the privacy of future occupants. Neighbouring amenity is considered further in the following section of this report.

Amenity

- 8.12 Policy H1 of the JCS requires new development to have regard to the living conditions and amenity of both future occupiers and the occupiers of neighbouring properties.

- 8.13 The existing building would be converted to provide one 3-bed dwelling. All rooms within the converted building and would have sufficient daylight and outlook and are considered to be of reasonable size. Outdoor amenity space would be located to the rear and side of the property and is of a reasonable size. The remaining open space would still be available for public use.
- 8.14 In respect of neighbouring amenity, the proposed property would retain its existing footprint and there would be relatively minor alterations to windows and doors. Windows to the west elevation would be high level and therefore similar to those which currently exist. This protects the privacy of neighbours to the west, in addition to the privacy of occupiers. The proposed new window facing east, which would serve a bedroom, is at ground floor level and sufficient boundary treatments including the garden fence of the property, and the neighbouring properties would breakup views between properties. There is a distance of approximately 12.5m between this side elevation and the rear of properties which front Cosgrove Way. The introduction of new glazed doors and window to the rear (north) elevation would not be intrusive or lead to overlooking, being some 25m from the rear elevation of properties opposite, with open space and a footpath between the two. The boundary fence of the private garden would also break up views. Indeed, the existing community building has large windows and doors to this elevation. The front elevation facing south would replace the door to the porch and the existing window and provide one additional window. This elevation does not directly face any dwellings and would not lead to a loss of privacy over and above the existing situation.
- 8.15 A dropped kerb for wheelchair access would be provided down to the parking area. This would not be detrimental to neighbouring occupiers but provide a fit for purpose dwelling and parking for future occupants.
- 8.16 No other alterations are proposed, and it is not considered residential amenity of these properties would be adversely affected.
- 8.17 Environmental Health recommended that conditions to be imposed in relation to land contamination. However, as the proposal is for conversion rather than new build, such conditions are not considered to be necessary.

Highway Matters

- 8.18 Paragraph 109 of the NPPF advises that development should only be prevented or refused on highway grounds if there would be unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.
- 8.19 Access to the site would be via the existing access from Hinton Road and parking would be as per the existing situation. There is space for at least 3 cars which would be adequate for a 3-bedroom dwelling. The Northamptonshire Parking Standards (September 2016) advise that applications for a 3 bed dwelling should provide 2 parking spaces, therefore the development complies with the Northamptonshire Parking Standards. The Highway Authority have not objected to the proposed development.
- 8.20 NBC Environmental Health have requested the provision for 1 electric charging point per dwelling and as such, a condition can be attached for the provision for a scheme for electric vehicle charging. The details of boiler will be covered by Building Regulations.
- 8.21 It is not considered that the proposal would lead to any unacceptable adverse impacts on existing highway conditions within the area such that the application should be refused on this basis.

9 CONCLUSION

- 9.1 The proposal would utilise a community building that is currently under-used. It is acknowledged that some residents wish to keep the facility, however the review submitted by NPH justifies the loss of the facility as improvements will be made to alternative facilities. There is also another facility just a short distance away which reduces the impact on the immediate community. The

proposal involves minimal changes to the fabric of the building and external layout. It is considered that there is no significant demonstrable harm in terms of this particular use. The site is in a sustainable location with good access to the town and public transport and the development would make a positive contribution to the Council's 5-year housing supply. The development would not lead to any unacceptable adverse impacts on existing highway or existing or proposed residential amenity, or adjacent land uses.

9.2 The proposal is recommended for approval, subject to the conditions below.

10 CONDITIONS

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: SK08 20/03A, SK08 20/01C, SK08 20/02C and SK08 04.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to accord with the terms of the planning application.

3. Prior to first occupation of the residential dwelling hereby approved, full details of the proposed bin stores shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved bin stores shall be implemented in full accordance with the approved details prior to first occupation of the residential unit hereby approved and retained thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of amenity and to ensure a satisfactory standard of development in accordance with the requirements Policy S10 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

4. Prior to first occupation of the residential dwelling hereby approved, a detailed scheme of hard and soft landscaping for the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of amenity and to secure a satisfactory standard of development in accordance with Policies H1 and S10 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy. This is a pre-commencement condition to ensure timely submission of details.

5. All planting, seeding or turfing shown on approved details submitted under Condition 4 (Landscaping) shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding seasons following the occupation of the building or the completion of the development, whichever is the sooner, and which shall be maintained for a period of five years; such maintenance to include the replacement in the current or nearest planting season whichever is the sooner or shrubs that may die are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased with others of similar size and species.

Reason: In the interests of amenity and to secure a satisfactory standard of development in accordance with Policies H1 and S10 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy.

6. Prior to first occupation of the residential unit hereby approved, full details of at least 1 electric vehicle charging point for the approved residential unit hereby approved shall be first submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and fully implemented prior to the development being first brought into use and retained thereafter.

Reason: To ensure the provision of adequate facilities in accordance with the Northampton Parking Standards SPD.

7. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (or any order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification), no extensions including roof alteration/enlargement shall be erected to the dwelling hereby permitted.

Reason: In the interests of residential amenity and to prevent overdevelopment of the site in accordance with Policy E20 of the Northampton Local Plan and Policy H1 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy.

8. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (or any order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification), no additional windows shall be installed in the west elevation of the dwelling hereby permitted without prior written consent of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of residential amenity in accordance with Policy E20 of the Northampton Local Plan and Policy H1 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy.

9. Notwithstanding the details as submitted, full details of boundary treatment of the site shall be first submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved details shall be implemented prior to the first occupation of the dwelling hereby permitted and retained thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of amenity and to secure a satisfactory standard of development in accordance with Policies H1 and S10 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy.

Informative:

1. You will need to obtain formal street naming and numbering for the new unit(s) through Northampton Borough Council Building Control. For further information please call 01604 838920 or email buildingcontrol@northampton.gov.uk
2. Work on site must not occur outside the following hours:

Monday – Friday 7.30 a.m. – 18.00 p.m.,
Saturday 8.30 a.m. – 13.00 p.m. and
No work on Sundays & Bank Holidays.

11 BACKGROUND PAPERS

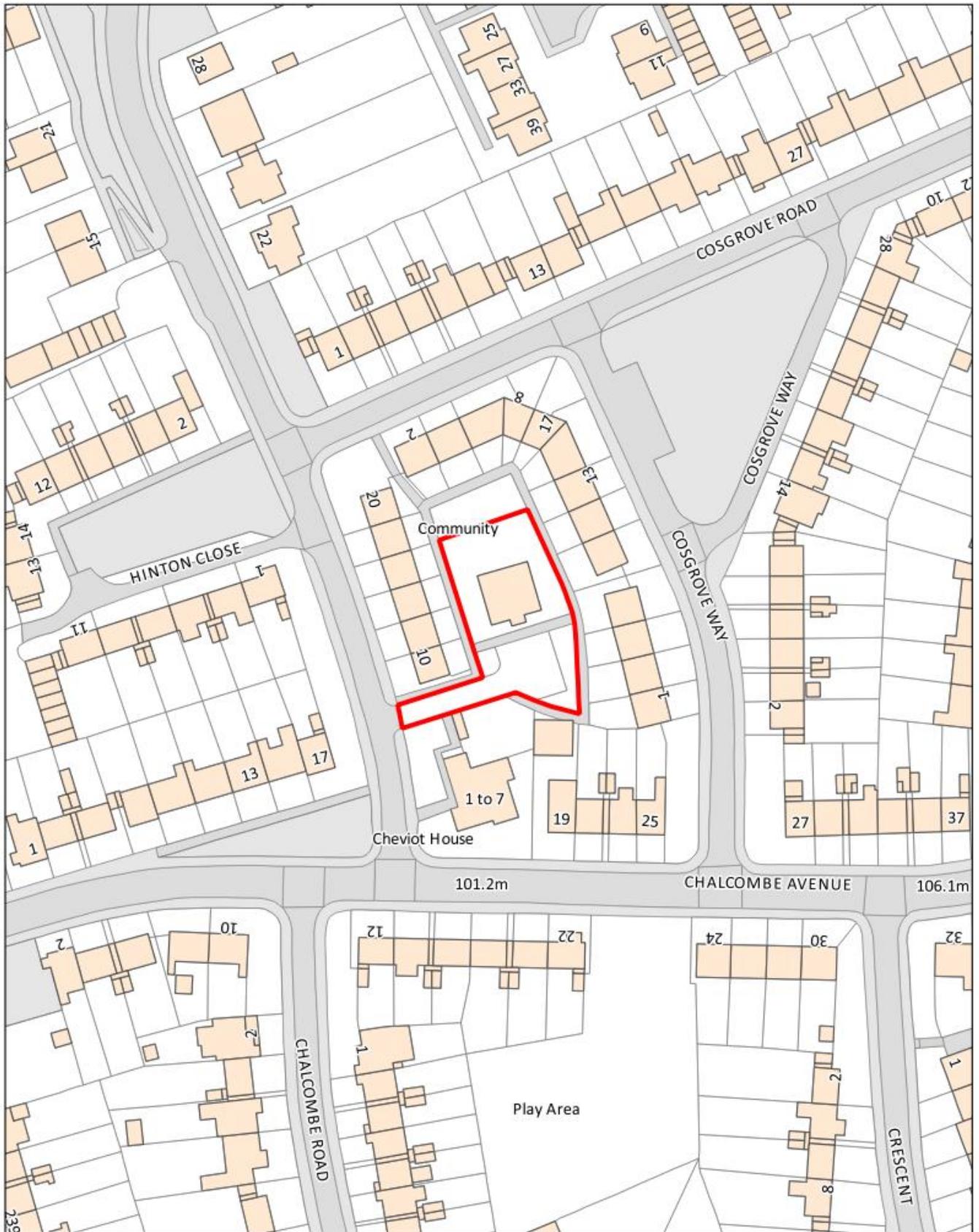
- 11.1 File N/2020/0257.

12 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 The development is CIL liable.

13 SUMMARY AND LINKS TO CORPORATE PLAN

- 13.1 In reaching the attached recommendations regard has been given to securing the objectives, visions and priorities outlined in the Corporate Plan together with those of associated Frameworks and Strategies.



NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Title: **Hinton Road - Community Room**

© Crown copyright and database rights 2019 Ordnance Survey licence no. 100019655

Date: 16-07-2020

Scale: 1:1,000

Drawn by: -----